

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 16th 2014

RI DEM • Room 300

In attendance: Janet Coit, DEM, Council Chair
Jamia McDonald, RI EMA
Kevin Flynn, DOA/Planning
Grover Fugate, CRMC
Julia Gold (for Michael Fine), DOH
Richard Licht, DOA
Melissa Long (for Michael Lewis), DOT
Hanna Morini (for Marcel Valois), CommerceRI
Nicholas Ucci (for Marion Gold), DOA/OER
Jack Leyden, State Building Code Commissioner

Director Coit opened the meeting at approximately 3:05 PM. The first order of business was the minutes for the May 30, 2014 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made and approved.

Director Coit noted that the EC3 Report had been finalized and submitted to the Governor and General Assembly. She distributed copies to the committee and noted that the report is available online.

Director Coit also noted the passage of the Climate Change legislation. Copies were distributed. It was noted that the legislation did not designate a Chair or Vice-Chair.

A motion was made by Director Licht that Janet Coit be elected as Chair. The motion was seconded. With no further discussion the motion was approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Director Licht that Jamia McDonald be elected as Vice-Chair. The motion was seconded. With no further discussion the motion was approved unanimously.

Director Coit noted that there will be a bill signing on August 1, 2014.

Discussion continued on provisions of the new law, including the requirement that each agency name a lead contact, and the establishment of an Advisory Council, as well as a Science and Technical Advisory Board. Recommendations for appointments by the Governor, Speaker of the House and/or President of the Senate can be forwarded to Jan Reitsma for consideration by the appointing authorities.

It was also noted that budgetary needs moving forward should be considered soon as the budgets for FY 2016 must be included in budget requests due October 1.

A hand-out on implementation priorities for the EC3 report was distributed and discussed. Jan Reitsma explained that the recommended priority actions focus on actions that can be taken over the next six months and have the greatest impact, i.e. meet the most urgent needs, but also get projects underway so they can continue next year, and establish partnerships that can provide continuity. The table is not

intended to take other projects off the table, just to get consensus for a common set of priorities for the next several months.

Director Fugate discussed a new publication for homeowners in coastal areas.

A longer discussion followed on the need to provide cities and towns relatively quickly with consistent guidance, even on an interim basis, on sea level rise, storm surge and other, including inland, flooding. It was agreed a small interagency group would convene to resolve remaining issues and produce the guidance.

Nick Ucci discussed the status of the State Energy Plan.

Director McDonald made a presentation on a recently initiated process to conduct vulnerability assessments in sixteen sectors, in accordance with a federal mandate, which will hopefully allow the State to cover much if not all of the vulnerability assessment work identified in the EC3 report. Questions were raised about the scope and methodology of this approach (for example, whether it includes socio-economic, in addition to physical, impacts) and interagency coordination. It was agreed that a separate discussion should be scheduled on those topics and to make sure that the state and federal objectives are aligned as much as possible.

Kevin Flynn discussed the status of the Economic Development Plan due to be finalized by the end of the year (plan required by statute to help the in-coming administration).

Kevin Flynn also noted the recently announced, federal Disaster Resilience grant funding opportunity, and suggested interagency coordination on developing an application.

Jan Reitsma noted that additional comments on the follow-up document should be forwarded to him.

Director Coit announced that the Council's next meeting will be in September, but that work will continue in smaller groups in the interim. She then opened the meeting to public comment.

Peter Galvin of the Sierra Club RI commented that, until the Advisory Board is functioning, the Council should find a way to continue to involve outside stake-holders.

Tom Uva of the Narragansett Bay Commission noted the need to develop and disseminate base-line information on flooding.

Robert Mullins noted that climate change impacts have become one of the biggest destabilizing issues around the world.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:10 PM.